



Region One  
PO Box 10818,  
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# CALIFORNIA NARCOTIC OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION

## REGION ONE



**Training Class**

**A Forensic Autopsy of a Fentanyl Poisoning Homicide Trial**

**Monday, March 10, 2025**

**0900-1700**

**Dublin, CA**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Description: This course will discuss in detail the facts and pitfalls surrounding the second successful fentanyl poisoning murder prosecution in California history. From the inception of the investigation, to the reasons why the first trial ended in a mistrial, and ultimately the good the bad and the ugly surrounding the second trial that concluded in 12 jurors agreeing that a fentanyl dealer who chooses profit over life, is guilty of murder. This course will be separated into three distinct segments. First, Detective Craven will discuss the multiple young lives lost prior to the victim in question and the investigative path that led to the drug dealer. Detective Craven will then discuss the challenges in establishing implied malice in the context of a fentanyl poisoning along with how he convinced prosecutors to file murder charges. Second, SDDA Portillo will discuss the process of building the case for trial including the unique legal battles waged throughout. SDDA Portillo will discuss the initial strategy going into the first trial as well as the pivot made for the second trial including new expert witnesses. Along the way SDDA Portillo will explain the reason for the first mistrial, the defense tactics – some of which resonated with both juries, and the un-anticipated problems with the evidence that were exposed during trial. Lastly, both instructors will discuss the lessons learned and how they are being applied to current and future prosecutions including thoughts behind how far up the drug supply chain you can go and still charge murder.

**INSTRUCTOR(S):**

Detective Patrick Craven is employed by the Placer County Sheriff's Office. Currently, he serves as the lead detective for the Placer Opioid Response Team (PORT), a specialized unit dedicated to addressing opioid-related issues. Before his role in PORT, Detective Craven spent four years as an undercover narcotics officer for the Placer County Special Investigation Unit (PSIU). In 2020, he began investigating fentanyl poisonings and has since been the lead detective on twenty-five cases involving fentanyl deaths. Detective Craven was the lead detective on California's first fentanyl poisoning homicide conviction as well as the state's second fentanyl poisoning homicide conviction by trial. In total, Detective Craven has successfully obtained three fentanyl poisoning homicide convictions and one manslaughter conviction. Detective Craven possesses unparalleled expertise in investigating fentanyl poisoning homicides and is leading the way in this specialized field. **Cpl.** Senior Deputy District Attorney Devan Portillo has been a prosecutor for just over a decade prosecuting everything from DUIs to homicides. For the past four years Devan has been the lead prosecutor for Unit 1, the special prosecutions unit of the Placer County District Attorney's Office that handles all human trafficking, cartel level major narcotics crimes, and fentanyl poisoning homicides. Unit 1 is well known within the state for its pathfinding work on fentanyl homicides including securing the first two fentanyl poisoning homicide pleas in California. SDDA Portillo is also the second prosecutor in the state to obtain a murder conviction by jury trial for fentanyl poisoning. SDDA Portillo has conducted multiple complex jury trials related to major narcotics and homicide and works in concert with both state and federal narcotics taskforces to actively identify, disrupt, and dismantle drug trafficking organizations. SDDA Portillo also teaches regularly for CNOA regarding confidential informants and narcotics prosecutions.

**LOCATION:**

Alameda Co. Office of Emergency Services  
4985 Broder Blvd  
Dublin, CA 94568

**COST:**

\$40 for CNOA Members \$60 for Non Members

Please register at [www.cnoaregionaltraining.org](http://www.cnoaregionaltraining.org) by clicking on the class title. Once registration is complete you will receive a confirmation email with payment instruction. We require a 48 hour notice for cancelations. Students canceling with less than 48 hours will not be issued a refund. Emergency cancellations will be considered. **Students are encouraged to bring a computer laptop to the class (please use "hot spot") no internet connection will be available.** Check in will start at 8:30 am. Payments for the class will be accepted at the door. (Cash, check, or credit card) **You will be required to provide LEO credentials for entry into the training class** **If you want to pre-pay prior to the class or for any other questions contact us at: [cnoaregion1@gmail.com](mailto:cnoaregion1@gmail.com)**

**Walk-ins always welcome!**